



DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

➤ 03 & 04 AUGUST 2025

NATIONAL AFFAIRS

1. MoTA Launches 3rd & 4th Regional Process Labs Under Aadi Karmayogi Abhiyan in Dehradun and Bhubaneswar.



In August 2025, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) launched the 3rd and 4th Regional Process Labs (RPLs) under the Aadi Karmayogi Abhiyan – National Mission for Responsive Governance, in Dehradun (Uttarakhand) and Bhubaneswar (Odisha) to strengthen tribal governance and capacity-building across India.

- MoTA's new initiative aims to create a strong grassroots leadership network among 20 lakh tribal functionaries and local change leaders across India. This will include outreach to over 1 lakh tribal-dominated villages, 3,000 blocks, and 550 districts spanning 30 States and Union Territories (UTs), promoting inclusive development and policy responsiveness.

- Regional Process Labs (RPLs) are institutional platforms operating at the district level, created under the Aadi Karmayogi Abhiyan. These labs act as key hubs for capacity-building and knowledge exchange. The first two RPLs were earlier launched in Bengaluru (Karnataka) and Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh), marking the foundation for a larger national framework.

- The 3rd RPL launched in Dehradun will serve as a training hub for State Master Trainers (SMTs) from five States/UTs, namely Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh (HP), Jammu & Kashmir (J&K), and Uttar Pradesh (UP). These SMTs will further build local capacities by training District Master Trainers (DMTs), creating a cascading model of knowledge transfer.

Key Points:-

(i) As part of the next phase, SMTs trained at the Dehradun RPL will establish State Process Labs (SPLs) in their respective states. These SPLs will function as training centres for District Master Trainers (DMTs), who will be responsible for implementing governance improvement strategies at the grassroots level in tribal communities.

(ii) The 4th RPL, launched in Bhubaneswar, includes a selected cohort of 25 participants representing the tribal-dominated states of Jharkhand, Bihar, and Odisha.

(iii) This RPL is being facilitated by the Bharat Rural Livelihoods Foundation (BRLF), a key partner in promoting sustainable tribal development through strategic partnerships and rural governance innovation.

2. Government Launches 'Apna Ghar' Resting Facilities to Support Truck Drivers on National Highways.



On 31 July 2025, the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas officially launched the ‘Apna Ghar’ (literally “Our Home”) initiative—a network of hygienic, safe, and affordable rest stations for truck drivers across India’s national and state highways. By July 1, a total of 368 facilities with 4,611 beds were operational through Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) at retail fuel outlets, representing a major step toward promoting road safety and driver welfare.

- Each Apna Ghar provides dormitory accommodation (ranging from 10 to 30 beds), clean toilets, dedicated bathing areas (known as houdas), purified drinking water, self-cooking areas, and nearby restaurants or dhabas, along with safe vehicle parking.

- A dedicated ‘Apna Ghar’ mobile application, developed to enhance accessibility and ease of use, empowers truck drivers to locate nearby rest facilities, pre-book dormitory accommodations, and submit real-time feedback on amenities. As of June 2025, the app witnessed widespread adoption with over 65,000 registered users, reflecting the initiative’s growing popularity and relevance among India’s long-haul driving community.

- Bookings surged more than five-fold, rising from approximately 3,348 (55/day) in April–May

to 16,559 (552/day) in June. In June 2025, a promotional scheme was launched offering free dormitory stays for drivers who purchased 50 liters of high-speed diesel from Apna Ghar outlets—set to run for three months.

Key Points:-

(i) OMCs have set up 368 Apna Ghar facilities so far, including four units on the under-construction Delhi–Mumbai Expressway, which will have 30 such sites once complete. The government aims to expand to 1,000 large-format fuel retail outlets by March 2027 with integrated trucker amenities.

(ii) Union Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri highlighted that most highway accidents stem from driver fatigue and inadequate rest. These air-conditioned facilities aim to mitigate such risks by providing comfort and basic amenities, improving drivers’ well-being and road safety.

3. Union Education Ministry Constitutes Expert Panel to Revise Anti-Discrimination Guidelines in Higher Education.



On 2 August, the Union Education Ministry constituted an Expert Panel aimed at revisiting and strengthening

anti-discrimination guidelines in higher educational institutions. The move focuses on ensuring equitable environments for students from Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Other Backward Classes (OBC), Persons with Disabilities (PwD), and other minority communities.

- The panel has been set up under the University Grants Commission (UGC) to comprehensively review existing regulations and schemes related to marginalized communities in universities and colleges, including SC, ST, OBC, PwD, and minorities.

- This initiative follows a Supreme Court directive issued on 6 July, which raised concerns over discrimination and student suicides among marginalized communities at premier institutions. The Court emphasized the need for “out-of-the-box thinking” to address these sensitive issues on campuses.

- The panel’s mandate includes assessing the effectiveness of existing anti-discrimination guidelines—including those framed in the UGC Promotion of Equity Regulations, 2012, and the updated grievance redressal norms of 2023—and identifying gaps in implementation.

Key Points:-

(i) Based on its findings, the Expert Panel will propose amendments and remedial measures to make campus environments more inclusive, foster diversity awareness, and encourage reporting of discriminatory incidents.

(ii) The existing UGC regulations mandate institutions to prohibit, prevent, and penalize any harassment or victimization based on caste, creed, religion, gender, disability, or ethnicity, and require liaison officers and grievance cells to address discrimination

effectively.

(iii) The constitution of this panel reflects the government’s proactive approach to safeguard marginalized students’ rights and underscores a commitment to promote equity and respect across campuses nationwide.

4. India Emerges as World’s Second-Largest Fish Producer with Nearly 8% Global Share.



In 2023–24, India emerged as the world’s second-largest fish producer, accounting for approximately 8% of total global fish production. This impressive achievement is rooted in robust growth across inland fisheries and aquaculture, driven by government initiatives like the Blue Revolution (Neel Kranti Mission) and the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY). The fisheries sector now plays a vital role in food security, export earnings, rural livelihoods, and national GDP.

- India’s fish production nearly doubled over a decade—from 95.79 lakh tonnes in 2013–14 to 184.02 lakh tonnes in 2023–24, reflecting an addition of 88.23 lakh tonnes. Within this, inland and aquaculture production surged by

77.71 lakh tonnes, while marine production expanded from 5.02 lakh to 10.52 lakh tonnes.

- According to FAO's State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA) 2024, India contributes about 8% of global aquatic animal production, ranking second only to China, and leads in inland fish production globally. The sector employs around 30 million people, mostly in rural and coastal communities, and contributes roughly 1.07% of national GDP, and over 6.7% to agricultural GDP or Gross Value Added (GVA).
- Exports also soared: in 2023–24, India exported 17.81 lakh metric tonnes of marine products, earning around ₹60,524 crore, up dramatically from ₹609.95 crore in 2003–04.

Key Points:-

(i) Government schemes underpinning this growth include the Blue Revolution, launched in FY 2015–16 with an initial allocation of ₹3,000 crore, and PMMSY (2020–25), an umbrella mission with ₹20,050 crore funding aimed at doubling fish farmers' incomes, modernizing infrastructure, and boosting exports via PM-MKSSY (Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojana).

(ii) Infrastructure development under these schemes includes funding through the Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund (FIDF) (₹7,522 crore approved), creation of Integrated Aquaparks (11 approved at ₹682.6 crore), and installation of 937 artificial reefs across coastal states at ₹291.37 crore.

(iii) India's leadership in fisheries is supported by institutions like the National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB) and Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI), which coordinate data collection,

stock assessments, resource mapping, and promote sustainable practices as part of India's Blue Transformation agenda.

5. India Conducts First-Ever Grassland Bird Census at Kaziranga National Park and Records 43 Species.



Between 18 March and 25 May 2025, Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve in Assam executed India's first dedicated Grassland Bird Census. Spanning across 185 grassland sites in the Eastern Assam, Biswanath, and Nagaon Wildlife Divisions, the survey employed innovative methods like passive acoustic monitoring and point count surveys to document grassland bird species that are seldom studied in India's floodplain ecosystems.

● The survey identified 43 species of grassland-dependent birds, including one Critically Endangered, two Endangered, and six Vulnerable species, as classified under the IUCN Red List. This places Kaziranga among India's top habitats for grassland bird diversity.

● Special emphasis was placed on ten priority species that are globally threatened or endemic to the Brahmaputra floodplains: Bengal Florican, Swamp Francolin, Finn's Weaver, Swamp Grass

Babbler, Jerdon's Babbler, Slender-billed Babbler, Black-breasted Parrotbill, Marsh Babbler, Bristled Grassbird, and Indian Grassbird—all identified during the census.

- A major highlight was the discovery of a breeding colony of the endangered Finn's Weaver (*Ploceus megarhynchus*), locally known as Tukura Sorai. Over 85 nests were found in the Kohora Range, making it a landmark finding and indicator of healthy grassland ecosystems.

Key Points:-

(i) The census utilized passive acoustic recorders, placed in tall grassland trees to capture bird calls during the breeding season. These sound recordings were analyzed using AI tools like BirdNET, allowing non-invasive identification even in remote or difficult terrain areas.

(ii) Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his "Mann Ki Baat" broadcast (July 2025), lauded the use of AI-driven methodology and noted how over 40 rare grassland bird species were recorded without disturbing their natural habitat, highlighting the successful blend of technology and conservation.

(iii) The census report, released on 11 July 2025 by the Environment Minister, underscores the need for long-term ecological monitoring, adaptive habitat management, and focus on lesser-studied grassland avifauna. It also establishes a template for future grassland conservation efforts nationwide, bringing avian diversity into focus alongside Kaziranga's famed megafauna.

6. Western Railway Resumes Heritage Train on 155-Year-Old Patalpani-Kalakund Line in Madhya Pradesh.



After a temporary halt, Western Railway resumed operation of the heritage train on the historic Patalpani-Kalakund metre-gauge line in Madhya Pradesh in August 2025. This 9.5 km stretch, part of the Dr. Ambedkar Nagar (formerly Mhow)-Khandwa section, dates back to the 1870s, making it nearly 155 years old.

- This heritage line, built in the decades following 1870, was initiated through a loan from the Holkar State, connecting Indore's capital to Khandwa. The Patalpani-Kalakund section, around 9.5 km long, includes four tunnels, 24 sharp curves, and 41 bridges (six large and 35 smaller). It is a remarkable legacy of engineering from the colonial era.

- The heritage service was first launched on 25 December 2018, when the metre-gauge line was preserved instead of being converted to broad gauge due to challenging terrain. Two trains now traverse the scenic route daily at speeds between 5–10 km/h, showcasing waterfalls, forested gorges, and natural springs.

Key Points:-

(i) In July 2025, after a period of suspension

due to low tourist footfall, Western Railway restarted the heritage operations, reviving the oldest surviving metre-gauge line still running in central India.

(ii) This route remains one of the six officially recognized heritage lines of Indian Railways, even though formal Railway Board certification is still awaited. Frequently referred to as the Patalpani–Kalakund Heritage Line, it draws rail enthusiasts and tourists alike.

(iii) The route's terrain makes gauge conversion impractical. Thus, Indian Railways opted to preserve the metre-gauge heritage stretch, weaving historic significance and picturesque landscapes to deliver a nostalgic experience.

7. VOC Port Becomes India's First Port to Produce Green Hydrogen and Surpass 1 MW Solar Power Generation.



In August 2025, V.O. Chidambaranar (VOC) Port located in Thoothukudi, Tamil Nadu, became the first Indian port to successfully produce green hydrogen and generate more than 1 Megawatt (MW) of rooftop solar power.

- The milestone was announced by Sushant Kumar Purohit, IRSEE (Indian Railway Service of Electrical Engineers), Chairperson of VOC Port, during a landmark conference on sustainable maritime development.

- The announcement was made at the 'Green Ports and Shipping – Chartering Sustainable Maritime Future' conference, held in Thoothukudi, Tamil Nadu, to promote green initiatives in the Indian shipping and port sector.

- The one-day conference was hosted by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW) through its NAVIC (Navigation with Indian Constellation) Cell-3, which is responsible for Green Initiatives and Pollution Control.

Key Points:-

(i) The event was part of a national series of thematic workshops and roadshows being held in the lead-up to India Maritime Week 2025, scheduled for October 2025 in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

(ii) Key sessions at the conference focused on Decarbonisation in the Maritime Sector and Green Financing and Policy Frameworks, both aimed at advancing India's maritime industry toward a net-zero emissions future.

BANKING & FINANCE

1. NPCI Enforces New UPI Guidelines from August 1, 2025 to Streamline Digital Payments and Reduce Network Load.



To enhance the efficiency and reliability of digital payments, the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has enforced new guidelines under the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) system, effective from August 1, 2025. These rules, issued in May 2025, are aimed at streamlining user activity, safeguarding user privacy, and reducing digital congestion on the UPI network.

- NPCI has directed all Payment Service Providers (PSPs), including Google Pay (GPay), PhonePe, and Paytm, to implement the new UPI changes by July 31, 2025. These PSPs are required to upgrade their systems to comply with the revised policies to ensure uniformity across the UPI ecosystem.
- Under the new guidelines, a Balance Enquiry Limit has been introduced, restricting users to a maximum of 50 balance checks per day per UPI application through manual requests. Any background or automated balance checks triggered by applications are now strictly disallowed to minimize unnecessary server load.

Key Points:-

(i) Another significant rule pertains to List Account access. UPI applications can now check and list the linked bank accounts of users only up to 25 times a day per user, to

strengthen user data privacy and prevent overutilization of banking resources by third-party apps.

(ii) The guidelines also enforce a new rule for Autopay transactions. All PSPs must schedule autopay executions only during non-peak hours to reduce traffic congestion during high-demand periods, ensuring smoother transaction flows across the system.

(iii) Lastly, penalties have been introduced for non-compliance. If any UPI application or PSP fails to follow these guidelines, they may face restricted access to UPI APIs (Application Programming Interfaces), onboarding limitations for new users, and technical or regulatory consequences as imposed by NPCI.

2. India Post Payments Bank Launches Aadhaar-Based Face Authentication for Contactless Digital Banking.



On 1 August 2025, India Post Payments Bank (IPPB), under the Ministry of Communications, Department of Posts, launched a nationwide Aadhaar-based Face Authentication service. Developed in collaboration with the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), the innovation

aims to offer elderly, differently-abled, and remote customers a seamless, secure, and dignified banking experience.

- **India Post Payments Bank (IPPB)**, established in September 2018 under the Department of Posts, serves over 11 crore customers via around 1.65 lakh post offices and a workforce of 3 lakh postal employees nationwide—delivering banking to the doorstep of India’s underserved populations.

- The Aadhaar-based Face Authentication feature, developed under UIDAI’s framework (UIDAI: Unique Identification Authority of India), enables users to perform key banking services—such as account opening, balance inquiry, fund transfers, and utility bill payments—using facial recognition instead of fingerprint scans or one-time passwords (OTPs).

- IPPB’s Managing Director & CEO R. Viswesvaran (Indian Railway Service Electrical Engineers - IRSEE) emphasized the innovation’s human-centric nature, stating it ensures access is not compromised by worn fingerprints or limited tech access, and aligns with IPPB’s motto “Aapka Bank, Aapke Dwaar”.

Key Points:-

(i) This contactless, biometric-free authentication method is particularly beneficial for senior citizens, differently-abled individuals, or those in remote areas, removing dependency on OTPs or fingerprint readers, and supporting hygiene and accessibility during health emergencies.

(ii) The rollout aligns with India’s broader Digital India and Financial Inclusion Missions, reinforcing IPPB’s mandate to bridge the digital divide and deliver paperless, cashless, presence-less, and now touchless banking across India’s postal

network.

(iii) Built on advanced AI-powered facial recognition algorithms validated under UIDAI’s authentication infrastructure, the feature can securely verify identity in real time on the IPPB mobile banking platform, enabling a scalable, consistent and robust digital banking experience.

3. RBI Approves Merger of New India Co-operative Bank with Saraswat Bank, Effective August 4, 2025.



The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has sanctioned the voluntary merger of New India Co-operative Bank Ltd (NICBL), based in Mumbai, with the country’s largest urban co-operative lender, Saraswat Co-operative Bank Ltd. The integration takes effect on 4 August 2025, with all branches converting under the Saraswat banner.

- The amalgamation, sanctioned under Section 44A(4) read with Section 56 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, marks a pivotal consolidation in the cooperative banking sector. Following shareholder approvals in July 2025, the merged entity will fully absorb NICBL’s customer base, assets, and liabilities—and

convert all 27 NICBL branches into Saraswat Bank outlets from 4 August 2025.

- **Saraswat Co-operative Bank**, headquartered in Mumbai, commanded a total business of around ₹91,814 crore as of March 2025, including ₹55,481 crore in deposits and ₹36,333 crore in advances. This scale vastly overshadows NICBL, whose total business stood at approximately ₹3,560 crore, with deposits ranging from ₹2,250–2,400 crore and advances of ₹1,100–1,162 crore.

Key Points:-

(i) NICBL had come under regulatory scrutiny in February 2025, following the disclosure of a ₹122 crore embezzlement scandal involving senior executives. The RBI subsequently imposed a moratorium, froze withdrawal and lending operations, and appointed an administrator to oversee the bank's affairs. The merger is seen as a remedy to protect depositors and restore operational stability.

(ii) Saraswat Bank's Chairman, Gautam E. Thakur, reiterated assurances that customer deposits and accrued interest would remain fully intact, with no haircut imposed. He further explained that despite NICBL's negative net worth of ₹102.74 crore, Saraswat Bank's robust capital adequacy ratio of 17%+ and strong financial health enable it to absorb the impact, expecting recovery within 12–24 months.

4. Choice AMC Receives SEBI Approval to Launch Mutual Fund Business Under Choice Mutual Fund Brand.



On 1 August 2025, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) granted final approval to Choice AMC Private Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary of Choice International Limited, authorizing it to operate as the Asset Management Company (AMC) for the newly established Choice Mutual Fund, marking its entry into India's mutual fund industry.

- **Choice International Limited**, headquartered in Mumbai and a diversified financial services conglomerate, has now positioned itself to officially enter the mutual fund domain. The group will launch Choice Mutual Fund, which will be sponsored by Choice International and operated through its AMC subsidiary, with complete regulatory oversight by SEBI under India's mutual fund norms.

- The new AMC plans to initiate operations with passive investment products, including index funds and exchange-traded funds (ETFs), aligning with global trends favoring low-cost, transparent, and scalable financial instruments. The phased rollout is aimed at attracting retail, emerging affluent, and institutional investors across India's financial ecosystem.

Key Points:-

(i) Arun Poddar, CEO and Executive Director

of Choice International, emphasized that the approval marks a key milestone in expanding the group's financial services footprint. He highlighted the ambition to offer professionally managed, technology-driven products under a robust governance and regulatory framework, fostering investor confidence.

(ii) With SEBI's license now secured, Choice AMC will collaborate closely with a designated Trustee Company (mandated under mutual fund regulations) and comply with all operational conditions set forth by SEBI to initiate its mutual fund schemes—expected to begin before Diwali 2025.

(iii) This SEBI approval underscores the growing competitiveness in India's mutual fund sector. By entering through passive funds, Choice AMC joins other emerging players in democratizing access to investment products, supporting regulatory efforts to deepen markets and promote financial inclusion.

ECONOMY & BUSINESS

1. GST Council Reaffirms 28% Tax on Online Gaming, Casinos, and Horse Racing from October 1, 2023 on Total Deposits.



On 2 August 2023, the GST Council, chaired by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, reaffirmed its decision to levy a 28% Goods and Services Tax (GST) on online gaming, casinos, and horse racing, effective 1 October 2023, applicable to total player deposits rather than winnings.

- At its 51st meeting, the GST Council confirmed the tax would be calculated on the full face value of bets or deposits—not on gross gaming revenue (GGR) or platform fees. This applies uniformly to both games of skill and games of chance, closing earlier ambiguity in tax treatment among state finance ministers.

- A subsequent Law Committee under CGST/IGST Acts recommended that taxable value include the total amount deposited by users into platforms—including real or digital assets. Measures were also proposed to mandate offshore platforms' GST registration and empower Information Technology acts to block access on non-compliance.

- Since the revisions came into force, monthly GST collections from online gaming rose dramatically—from roughly ₹250 crore to ₹1,100 crore, a 412% increase. However, the sector saw 20–30% revenue decline and profit margins shrink by 60–70%, causing significant distress especially for start-ups and SMEs.

Key Points:-

(i) Over 27 gaming companies, including industry names like Dream11 and Gameskraft, are contesting retrospective GST demands exceeding ₹1.12 lakh crore placed by authorities.

(ii) They argue that games of skill have long been legally distinguished from gambling and should not attract the same levy. The dispute is now pending before the Supreme

Court.

(iii) The Council will review the impact of this 28% tax regime six months after implementation, i.e. around April 2024, considering state-specific concerns and potential industry relief. Despite warnings from states like Goa, Karnataka, and Sikkim about heavy burden, the overall consensus remains to uphold the levy—citing revenue and regulatory consistency

2. Fitch Ratings Cuts India's GDP Growth Forecast for FY26 to 6.3% and Citing Export Weakness and Global Uncertainty.



In August 2025, Fitch Ratings Inc., a leading American credit rating agency, revised India's GDP (Gross Domestic Product) growth forecast for FY26 to 6.3%, citing moderate export demand and limited impact of U.S. tariffs. This updated projection was detailed in Fitch's latest report titled "India Corporates Credit Trends: July 2025".

- Fitch's downward revision brings India's projected GDP growth for FY2025–26 to 6.3%, a decrease from its earlier estimate of 6.4% released in its Global Economic Outlook (GEO) report in April 2025. The agency cited macroeconomic pressures and weaker global

trade as primary reasons behind this moderation.

- According to the report, the recent 25% tariff imposed by the United States (USA) on Indian corporate exports has had limited direct impact, largely because of India's low export exposure to the U.S. market. Indian firms, particularly in manufacturing and core sectors, have been more reliant on domestic demand, which has cushioned them against external shocks.

Key Points:-

(i) The report also highlighted a rise in domestic infrastructure spending, boosting demand across core sectors like steel, cement, and power. However, Fitch warned of a 3% decline in aggregate revenue for Indian corporates in FY26, citing weaker global consumption trends and rising interest costs.

(ii) In a related update, S&P Global Market Intelligence (MI) also projected India's GDP at 6.2% for FY26, down from 6.5% in FY25, should the U.S. tariffs remain in place beyond September 2025.

(iii) S&P attributed this expected slowdown to persistent external headwinds and domestic cost pressures on Indian firms.

AWARDS

1. Magnus Carlsen Crowned Champion at the First-Ever Chess Esports World Cup in Riyadh.



On 1 August 2025, Norwegian Grandmaster Magnus Carlsen clinched the inaugural Chess Esports World Cup title held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, defeating France's Alireza Firouzja in straight sets. The event, part of the Esports World Cup franchise, featured a US\$1.5 million prize pool, with Carlsen earning US \$250,000.

- Carlsen's win inaugurated chess as a premier esports discipline at the 2025 Esports World Cup, managed by the Esports World Cup Foundation. The 16-player event—which qualified participants via the Champions Chess Tour—was held from 29 July to 1 August 2025 on the Chess.com platform, drawing global attention to the evolution of digital chess competition

- In the Grand Final, Carlsen (representing Team Liquid) decisively beat Firouzja of Team Falcons, winning two consecutive best-of-three sets, each by a 3–1 score. Team Liquid gained the edge in the overall Club Championship standings with this victory .

Key Points:-

(i) Earlier in the tournament, Hikaru Nakamura reached the semifinals but lost a nail-biting 4–3 Armageddon tiebreak to Carlsen. Nakamura later secured third place

by defeating Arjun Erigaisi of Gen.G Esports 3.5–2.5 in the bronze medal match, earning US \$145,000.

(ii) In his acceptance speech, Carlsen called the event “a new ground conquered” and expressed hope that chess will become a permanent fixture at future esports competitions. With chess joining the lineup, spectator engagement soared—over 30,000 viewers watched live on Chess.com, setting new records for grandmaster matches in an esports setting.

(iii) This historic victory signified not just a personal milestone for Carlsen but also a leap forward for chess as a digital sport. His triumph underlines the merging paths of traditional board games and esports, reflecting wider trends in global sporting entertainment.

App and Web Portal

1. Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma Launches 'Amrit Brikshya Andolan' App to Spur 1 Crore Sapling Drive.



On 2 August 2023, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma unveiled the 'Amrit Brikshya Andolan' mobile app and web portal, marking the start of the state's ambitious plantation campaign. The initiative

aims to plant 1 crore (10 million) commercially viable saplings—such as teak, sal, and sandalwood—across Assam in a single day on 17 September 2023, involving public participation to strengthen the state's green cover and contribute to climate action.

- The Amrit Brikshya Andolan mobile app and portal, launched in Guwahati's Janata Bhawan, serve as digital platforms to register participants, share geo-tagged planting photos, and issue participation certificates. Registered citizens receive ₹100 per sapling, with an additional ₹200 if the sapling survives for three years.
- On 17 September 2023, around 40 lakh members of women self-help groups across Assam were lined up to plant two saplings each, totaling 80 lakh, while the remaining 20 lakh+ saplings were slated to be planted by government officials, frontline workers, tea garden labourers, and the general public.
- The campaign targets not just environmental restoration but also rural livelihood enhancement. Commercial saplings planted can be sold without forest department permission, offering income generation opportunities to farmers and villagers.

Key Points:-

(i) Assam aims to expand the drive in future phases—targeting 3 crore saplings in 2024, and 5 crore by 2025, with the goal to raise the forest cover in the state from 36% to 38%. The 2024 edition introduced digital upgrades, enabling easier registration and monitoring via app.

(ii) Dubbed a key element of Assam's green economy strategy and climate resilience agenda, the initiative aligns with CM Sarma's vision of sustainable development

and biodiversity enrichment, and has been touted as Assam's contribution to national climate goals.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. SpaceX Launches Crew-11 International Crew to the ISS Under NASA's Commercial Crew Program.



On 1 August 2025, SpaceX successfully launched its Crew-11 mission under NASA's Commercial Crew Program from Launch Complex 39A at Kennedy Space Center (Florida) aboard a Falcon 9 rocket and Crew Dragon Endeavour capsule. The mission carries four astronauts to the International Space Station for a planned six-month stay.

● The international Crew-11 mission includes NASA astronauts Zena Cardman (Commander) and Mike Fincke (Pilot), Kimiya Yui from the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA), and Russian cosmonaut Oleg Platonov representing Roscosmos. It is the eleventh crew rotation flight under NASA's Commercial Crew Program and the twelfth human spaceflight for Dragon vehicles.

● Originally scheduled for 31 July 2025 at 12:09 p.m. EDT, the launch was postponed due to cumulus cloud cover. SpaceX rescheduled

liftoff to 1 August 2025 at 11:43 a.m. EDT, when weather conditions cleared, abiding by stringent launch safety protocols.

- After successful stage separation, the Falcon 9 first-stage booster (B1094.3) landed autonomously at Landing Zone 1 at Cape Canaveral Space Force Station, marking its third mission reuse. The Dragon capsule autonomously docked with the ISS at the Harmony module's zenith port overnight on 2 August 2025 at approximately 3 a.m. EDT (7:00 UTC).

Key Points:-

(i) This marks a return to space for Mike Fincke, who rejoined after a 14-year break since his last flight on Space Shuttle Endeavour STS-134. For Zena Cardman and Oleg Platonov, it is their first space mission; Kimiya Yui makes his second journey, with the Japanese astronaut having previously flown in 2015.

(ii) The mission aligns with NASA's Artemis program vision and global space collaboration, integrating efforts from NASA, Roscosmos, and JAXA aboard a private-sector spacecraft. Crew-11 will assist with scientific research and station maintenance alongside the Expedition 73 crew, before taking over duties from departing Crew-10 members.

(iii) NASA may extend the Crew-11 mission from the typical six-month term to eight months to optimise scheduling amid budget constraints and alignment with Russian cooperation, following proposed funding cuts to NASA programs including ISS operations by the U.S. administration for FY26.

Static GK

Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA)	Union Minister : Jual Oram	Headquarters: New Delhi
Assam	Chief minister: Himanta Biswa Sarma	Governor: Lakshman Acharya
Madhya Pradesh	Capital: Bhopal	Governor: Mangubhai C. Patel
National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)	MD 7 CEO : Dilip Asbe	Headquarter : Mumbai
Fitch Ratings	President : Ian Linnell	Headquarters : New York, the United States of America (USA)
SpaceX	CEO : Elon Musk	Headquarters : California, the United States of America(USA)